

Urban THE NEW

March 2017

HOMABAY COUNTY



Mbita Town Has a Vision!

A bird's eye view of Mbita Town

“An orderly, vibrant and scenic lake town for sustainable growth.”

That is the newly coined vision for Mbita Town, in Homabay County. The underlying resilience and optimism in those ten words are a reflection of residents of the lakeside town. The mainstay of Mbita Town is fishing. Tourism comes in second, sustained by the sandy beaches of Lake Victoria and Ruma National

Park. A crossway connects the town to the famous Rusinga Island (the cradle of mankind), with accessibility to several other smaller islands. Mbita Town is the pilot town for the SymbioCity Kenya Programme in Homabay County.

With such a rich foundation, and the rapidly growing urban population of 6,100 people, Mbita Town faces real challenges of urbanisation, which can be handled with a solid vision. Formulated through

an interactive and collaborative process that involved all the key stakeholders, the Mbita Town Vision forms part of a progressive strategic framework that will guide Homabay County on how to effectively manage the town.

A town vision is a realistic, credible, attractive aspiration of the future. It articulates a destination towards which the town and its

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THE SYMBIOCITY KENYA PROGRAMME

What?

SymbioCity is an approach to sustainable development with emphasis on improving living conditions for the people living in urban areas. It doesn't provide ready-made solutions to all urban challenges. Instead it offers committed local elected representatives, officials and activists a chance to develop properly planned and managed cities where people work, access services and thrive! Urban areas with health, safety, comfort and quality of life for the people who live there. With efficiently managed urban services like waste management, mobility and water. And where the economic potential that urbanization brings is captured, while protecting the urban environment.

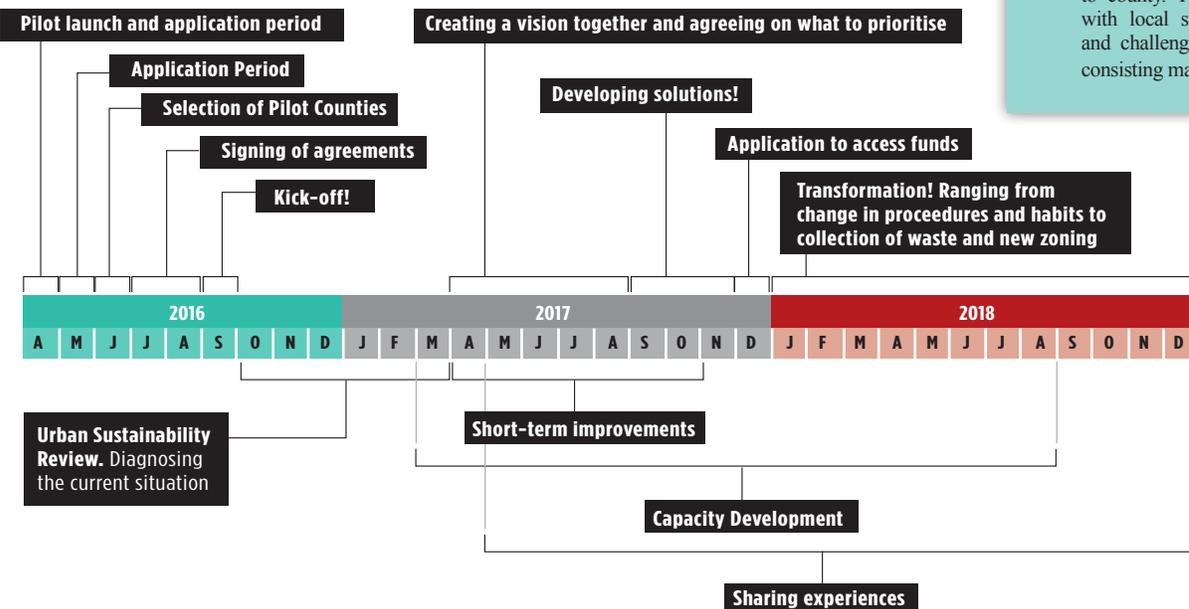
Who?

SymbioCity Kenya is a cooperation between Council of Governors and its sister organization, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Several counties have been selected, after a competitive application process, to become so called SymbioCity Pilots. Each county has selected a secondary town to be in focus for the piloting activities.

How?

Project activities are delivered by the Council of Governors, Urban Support Team, under the Land, Planning and Urban Development Committee. We are a team of mixed backgrounds and nationalities, with emphasis on Kenyan and Swedish urban specialists. In the respective pilot counties, a Working Group has been established, to guide the work in the county. The composition of the Working Group varies from county to county. The Working Group in its turn engages with local stakeholders when consulting on needs and challenges and report to a Steering Committee consisting mainly of County Government officials.

Timeline for SymbioCity Kenya Programme in Homabay County



THE SYMBIOCITY PILOTS!

Pilot	County
Mbita	Homabay
Butere	Kakamega
Ahero	Kisumu
Kwa Vonza	Kitui
Makutano	Meru
Njoro	Nakuru
Kiminini	Trans Nzoia



The Homabay Pilot Core team (from right) George Opiata, Billy Otieno and Richard Bonyo

We're Stronger Together

The success of any project depends to a large extent on the engagement of its stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is the broad inclusion and continuous consultations between an organisation and the people that it is likely to impact with its activities. The SymbioCity Kenya Programme is applying "partnerships" and "participation" in its engagements with stakeholders in Homabay County.

Under Partnerships, the programme and the Homabay County Government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on how to share accountability and responsibility on implementation of activities. The key components of the approach are two-way engagements, and continuous joint learning and decision-making.

Under Participation, the programme aims at involving all stakeholders in all the phases of project implementation through a steering committee, a working group and a stakeholders group. The working group comprises of the county government's technical staff drawn from different departments as well as other government agencies. Led by the Programme

The SymbioCity Kenya Programme is applying "partnerships" and "participation" in its engagements with stakeholders"

Manager for Homabay County, the group's task is to ensure the success of SymbioCity. The stakeholders group is drawn from politicians, residents, Non-governmental Organisations operating in the area, as well as business owners and traders. The group is responsible for ensuring that the programme responds to the needs and aspiration of the community. The steering committee is responsible for strategically aligning the programme with the county's overall objectives.

What's Next ?

Building the Steps

Peter Drucker, an Austrian-American Management Consultant, said: "A vision is merely a good intention unless it is immediately converted into hard work."

Yet still, a Japanese Proverb states: "Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

Now that Mbita Town has already generated a vision, the community knows very well that it is only useful if implemented. Towards achieving this, a series of stakeholder engagements are planned to affirm the town vision, and put in place steps that will make the vision achievable.

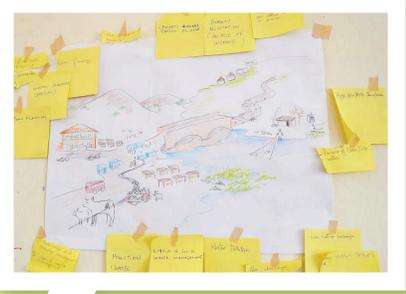
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residents should aim. An ideal town vision is developed through a process that involves as many community members as possible. Through a consensus, the participants agree on the future they want for their town, and how to achieve it. Those who formulated the vision included community groups; businessmen and women; transport operators - motorcycle taxis (*bodaboda*) and public vans (*matatu*); beach operators; fishermen and fish traders; civil society organisations and religious groups. Informing the vision are what the residents value most in their town today; what they would like changed; what they would like to be embraced; a shared image of

what they want their town to become; and steps that can be taken to move their town into a successful future.

With a vision in place, Mbita Town residents look forward to a future where their urban centre will effectively meet their socio-cultural, economic and physical needs.

6,100
the population in Mbita



The visioning workshop facilitated by Karin Eberle

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This newsletter has been put together by the SymbioCity Kenya team. The purpose is to share information with stakeholders on the process and progress of SymbioCity in Homabay County.